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# INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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## CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE TUDEH PARTY IN IRAN

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### Problem

Estimate of the current capability of the Tudeh Party to seize control in Iran.

### Discussion

Since the suppression of the Tudeh following the attempted assassination of the Shah in February 1949, the party has operated openly through the Peace Partisans and the Society Organized to Fight Imperialist Oil Companies. Up to April 29, 1951, when Mosadeq became Prime Minister, the usual official method of controlling Tudeh was by invoking martial law, making arrests, and suppressing newspapers. Mosadeq, however, lifted martial law, released certain Tudeh leaders from prison, and appealed to the entire population to maintain order. Public parades and demonstrations since that time have been tightly controlled by the participants, with the exception of the demonstration in Tehran on July 15, 1951.

Since a major objective of Soviet policy in Iran is to end western influence there, the Tudeh actively supported Mosadeq in his nationalization policy, except when it appeared likely that he might arrive at an agreement which would retain significant British control in Iran. Although Mosadeq has welcomed all support for nationalization, there is no evidence that he or any of his principal advisers, except possibly Abdul Qadir Azad and Dr. Ali Shayegan, have Communist sympathies. They are all, however, strong nationalists.

The Tudeh suffered a significant check as the result of a vigorous anti-Communist campaign carried on by religious groups during the month of Ramazan, and a severe setback on July 15 when they engaged in open fighting with the police and military in front of the Majlis. This street fight lost them the respect of many Iranian nationalists.

determined that

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repugnance for public rudeness to a national guest (Harriman), and significantly chilled the ardor of hangers-on and co-demonstrators.

In addition to the setback in Tehran, the strength of Tudeh in Isfahan was recently broken when the chief of police arrested all the ringleaders, jailing some, exiling some to Bandar Abbas, Yezd, and Kerman, and giving others suspended sentences. In Tabriz, Tudeh suffered another reversal when the ringleaders among university students were arrested and jailed. The major significance of these developments has been to demonstrate openly that there is a strong, effective anti-Tudeh force which can and will resist Tudeh pressures. This has had a distinctly wholesome effect in raising public morale.

[REDACTED] estimates  
the current active membership at 4000.

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Tudeh leaders have undoubtedly been instructed by Soviet agents to agitate for the expulsion of the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and to emphasize alleged British imperialism in Iran. Since support for Mosadeq is almost universal and anti-British sentiment is intense, it is very difficult to estimate public support for Tudeh. It is probable that Mosadeq himself could get Majlis and non-Tudeh acceptance of any compromise settlement which he would present and support. However, should he or a successor government approach an agreement with the British, Tudeh opposition will probably come into the open. It may also be expected to offer open opposition if the government presents any new legislation not related to the oil nationalization issue.

In the event that Mosadeq is forced out of office, part of his large popular following will probably join the anti-AIOC organization and ultimately the Tudeh ranks. Since any successor government would probably have to maintain order by force if it accepts any agreement which will, in effect, restore the AIOC to its former position in Iran, Tudeh may be expected to exploit the anticipated popular indignation to the fullest extent. The allegiance of the security forces, if ordered to support an unpopular settlement, is doubtful.

The balance of political power in Iran is now held by a third force composed principally of skilled workers, students, government employees, teachers, and industrial labor. The spokesmen of this force

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are the National Front leaders. Nazi, Soviet, and Western propaganda in the past 10 years has convinced this group that a better, freer standard of living is possible in Iran. The contrast between possible methods for achieving this end -- that is, between revolution and evolution -- is often overlooked or disregarded. Unless effective demonstration of evolutionary procedures appear, it is inevitable that increasing numbers of Iranians will be attracted to revolutionary methods. Cessation of revenues from the oil operations, and the economic dislocations that are occurring in consequence, will present Tudeh with increasing opportunities to promote revolution. At the present time the Shah's influence is practically nil. If the oil controversy continues to be regarded by Iranians as a fight for their national independence, it is probable that revolution will be ultimately accepted rather than acquiescence in any compromise which calls for retention of British predominance in the oil industry.

#### Conclusion

At the present time, Tudeh is not capable of seizing control. Given a continuation of the present economic deterioration and/or the replacement of the Mosadeq government by one willing to reestablish the British economic position within Iran, it is possible that that capability may exist by the early part of 1952.

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